

Student Success Seminar: An Orientation to the On-line Master's Degree in Community Development offered Fall 06 (one credit)

Purpose:

This seminar will serve as an orientation to on-line learning and communities of practice as well as an introduction to the courses, faculty and curriculum connected to the on-line master's degree program in community development. In addition, students will have an opportunity to meet each other on-line and practice using the technology to support learning objectives.

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To Participate in this class students must:

- Admission to the program at a participating institution or permission of the instructor.
- Access to a computer and Internet connection that will allow students to access and use the WebCT program. https://webct.ait.iastate.edu/ISUtools/webhtml/webct_specs.html
- Willingness to spend 2 to 4 hours per week on seminar activities.

Course Timeline:

Fall semester at ISU begins on August 21 and will officially end on December 10. This orientation course, however, will begin August 21 and end before Thanksgiving. The seminar will be offered primarily asynchronously, meaning that people can access the activities and submit their assignments whenever it is most convenient for them within the time period allocated for that module. Thus each module has a firm starting and finishing time, and students must complete those activities within the stated time frame. Exceptions must have prior approval by the instructor. We may attempt a synchronous activity such as a chat depending on the wishes and time availability of students.

Specific Course Objectives:

- Orientation to the on-line classroom environment.
 - Students will demonstrate skills in using the on-line platform by participating in the course activities including:
 - Logging into WebCT
 - Posting to the Bulletin Board
 - Using the Bulletin Board to share/teach others, discuss topics, and critique materials

- Students will demonstrate the ability to locate and use quality on-line community development materials.
- Students will act on an understanding of how the degree program works including identifying core courses and choosing tracks.
- Students will understand the requirements of an on-line graduate course by developing and implementing a plan for completing course activities
- Students will learn about 6 characteristics of successful on-line learners
 - Assertive and willing to ask questions – students will demonstrate by clarifying instructor expectations
 - Good listening skills – responds to other students and the instructor
 - Participates thoughtfully in on-line discussions
 - Is motivated to successfully complete the course
 - Demonstrates good time management skills

<http://www.cs.indiana.edu/how.2b/how.2b.html>

<http://www.acm.org/crossroads/xrds1-2/advice1.html>

- Orientation to graduate school
 - What makes graduate school different from undergraduate experiences?
 - Students will apply information on successfully doing graduate level work that includes
 1. critical thinking – differentiating between opinion, fact, and supposition
 2. do work that is analytical rather than descriptive
 3. using appropriate format for citations
 4. understanding why we focus on science in graduate school
 5. access online materials appropriately
 6. assessing skill levels and looking for tutorials in areas of weakness
 - students will understand the role of the advisor and contact their advisor to develop a program plan
- Developing an understanding of electronic communities of practice by:
 - Using the Web and email to share knowledge, develop new knowledge, transition knowledge to new environments and applications, and transform knowledge to new levels of understanding and wisdom.
 - Identifying three challenges to developing a community of practice, three challenges to maintaining a community of practice, and three strategies to address those challenges.
- Introduce the science and practice of community development including:
 - Distinguishing between science and practice by identifying examples of each and by providing an example of how research and practice interact in the field and in research settings.
 - Experience using strength-based approaches.
- Overview of the community development profession including:

- Understanding of opportunities available in the field by beginning a professional development plan.
- Comprehension of principles of good practice through applying them to your own work.
- Basic understanding of opportunities and challenges facing community developers.
- Practice professional communications and writing.

Required Text

Roszman, M. 2002. Negotiating Graduate School: A Guide for Graduate Students. Sage Publications

Additional readings are listed by session.

Grading

Students will be graded on the following:

- Course completion plan focused on time management: Due September 5 (5 points).
- Program completion and support plan including assessment of skills and actions to address skills gaps: Due September 25 (10 points).
- Three short papers (1 page) (5 points each):
 - Applying the principle of good practice to your own work: Due October 9.
 - Opportunities and challenges in your community: Due October 23.
 - Community Development professional development plan including professional associations, listserv, and websites: Due November 7.
- Group project: Due November 7 (23 points).
- Course assessment: Due November 20 (5 points).
- Participant in the Discussion (42 points, 7 per module): Each module has 4 to 6 opportunities for you to post content to the bulletin board or comment on others' posting. Discussion postings are evaluated based on participation level, interaction, and critical thinking. We will use a rubric similar to the one John Phillips used in his summer class.
 - Participation level: 2 points per module earned if posting(s) address the discussion question(s) in a substantive manner, showing that you clearly gave the question(s) thought and carefully prepared a response.
 - Interaction: 3 points per module if posting(s) respond to your classmates comments in a thoughtful and encouraging way. You should validate your classmate's comment by:
 - demonstrating that you understood what they were communicating and
 - elaborating on their comments with your own thoughts or perspective.
 - Constructive criticism is encouraged but should be communicated in a positive way.
 - Critical thinking: 2 points per module if posting(s) demonstrate critical thought and/or linkage with the readings (through the use of citations). Critical thought requires the student to use analytical tools such as comparing and contrasting, evaluating, hypothesizing, synthesizing, and so forth. It requires evidence- or theory-based reasoning, not simple opining. This is a graduate-level course, so your critical thought must be at an appropriate level.

- For each module, you should post an original comment, and then respond to your peers' comments. Use references to any resources so that your peers and I can connect your thoughts to the material. Think critically.

Seminar Activities:

Module I: (August 21 to September 5) Orientation to On-line learning and the Masters Degree Program

- Specific Objectives:
 - Demonstrate skills in using the on-line platform by participating in the course activities including:
 - Logging into WebCT
 - Posting to the Bulletin Board
 - Using the Bulletin Board to share/teach others, discuss topics, and critique materials
 - Demonstrate ability to locate and use quality on-line community development materials.
- Class activities
 - Use the log-in information sent to you to log into WebCT
 - By August 28th, post an introduction by telling us:
 - Who you are?
 - What you do?
 - What strengths do you bring to the program and this seminar?
 - What are your hopes for this seminar?
 - Respond to one of the posts by your classmates.
 - By August 28th review the slides on the on-line program.
 - Respond on the class bulletin board by:
 1. Sharing an aspect of the program that you feel will be particularly useful to you.
 2. Asking questions about the program.
 - Establishing ground rules:
 - By August 28th please use the bulletin board to share with your classmates three ways we can encourage each other to share ideas, information, and concerns via the bulletin board.
 - Review the ideas and tell us which ones you think will be most helpful to all of us.
 - What makes students successful in on-line programs?
 - Assertive and willing to ask questions – students will demonstrate by clarifying instructor expectations
 - Good listening skills – responds to other students and the instructor
 - Participates thoughtfully in on-line discussions
 - Is motivated to successfully complete the course
 - Demonstrates good time management skills
 - Useful websites:
<http://www.cs.indiana.edu/how.2b/how.2b.html>

<http://www.acm.org/crossroads/xrds1-2/advice1.html>

1. Review these websites and share with us what elements of successful on-line learning you think are most challenging and why.
 2. Respond to the discussion on challenges with at least one suggestion.
 3. Use these resources to complete a course completion time management plan.
- Reading Assignments:
 - Read Chapters 1 and 2 of Rossman and complete the exercises on pages 6-11, 13-14
 - Module assignments:
 - Respond to the questions above on the Bulletin Board and comment on others' entries.
 - Develop a time management plan for completing your courses and email to memery@iastate.edu. Due September 5.

Module II: (September 5 to September 25) How is graduate school different from undergraduate school?

- Graduate School and me:
 - Review the worksheets you completed and share with us your thoughts on strategies to succeed in graduate school.
- What makes graduate school different from undergraduate experiences?
 - Students will apply information on successfully doing graduate level work that includes
 1. critical thinking – differentiating between opinion, fact, and supposition
 2. do work that is analytical rather than descriptive
 3. using appropriate format for citations
 4. understanding why we focus on science in graduate school
 5. access online materials appropriately
 6. assessing skill levels and looking for tutorials in areas of weakness
 - students will understand the role of the advisor and contact their advisor to develop a program plan
- Review the information on plagiarism at:
<http://sociology.sdsstate.edu/arwoodd/soc716/babbie.pdf>.
 - Post any questions you might have about the policy.
- Review information on citations at one of the following sites:
 - <http://www.montgomerycollege.edu/library/libtp/instructions/apa/welcome.htm>
 - <http://www.waikato.ac.nz/library/learning/presentations/APA.ppt>

- Review the article on
<http://www.lib.berkeley.edu/TeachingLib/Guides/Internet/Evaluate.html>
 - World Wide Web Search: Using that criteria, find a Web site that adds value to your practice and post it to the bulletin board along with why you found it a useful and credible site
- Guest speaker to talk about how we use science in community development work
- Assess your skills:
 - Statistics:
 - <http://math.about.com/gi/dynamic/offsite.htm?zi=1/XJ&sdn=math&zu=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.statsoftinc.com%2Ftextbook%2Fstathome.html>
 - <http://math.about.com/gi/dynamic/offsite.htm?zi=1/XJ&sdn=math&zu=http%3A%2F%2Ficp.giss.nasa.gov%2Feducation%2Fstatistics%2F>
 - Economics
 - <http://www.investopedia.com/pdf/tutorials/economics.pdf>
- Reading Assignment:
 - Principles of Good Practice (<http://www.comm-dev.org/>)
 - Chapters 3 and 5 in Rossman
- Module assignments:
 - Develop strategies for a support plan including assessment of your skills in statistics and economics and send it to me.
 - If you have not yet done so, contact your advisor to discuss your program plan. Due September 25.
 - World Wide Web Search: Using that criteria, find a Web site that adds value to your practice and post it to the bulletin board along with why you found it a useful and credible site

CDS Principles of Good Practice

- Promote active and representative citizen participation so that community members can meaningfully influence decisions that affect their lives.
- Engage community members in problem diagnosis so that those affected may adequately understand the causes of their situations.
- Help community leaders understand the economic, social, political, environmental, and psychological impact associated with alternative solutions to the problem.
- Assist community members in designing and implementing a plan to solve agreed-upon problems by emphasizing shared leadership and active citizen participation in that process.
- Disengage from any effort that is likely to adversely affect the disadvantaged segments of a community.
- Actively work to increase leadership capacity (skills, confidence, and aspirations)

Module III: (September 25 to October 9) What are the basic skills in community development? How community developers work in the community and support one another: Principles of Good Practice and Communities of Practice

- Specific Objectives:
 - Learn about the graduate committee and thesis or creative component
 - Develop guidelines for a successful community of practice.
 - Apply the principles of good practice to community development practice.
 - Participate in a guest speaker session online.
- Class activities
 - Based on your reading, how do you see yourself succeeding in completing the thesis/project/creative component of the program? Share your ideas and questions.
 - Guest speaker to talk about principles of good practice in his/her work.
 - Read the Principles of Good Practice and share an example from your own practice/experience of when your work was a great example of good practice. Tell us what was it about that experience that made it such a good example. How could the Principles help your practice be even better in the future?
 - Read the postings from the guest speaker and classmates on the Principles and their experiences and identify a common theme to share with the group.
 - Review the material on communities of practice and post an example of a community practice or electronic community experience that worked well for you. What was it about that situation that made that situation so successful? What could our community of practice look like if we could improve on the examples shared to have an even better experience? Post your suggestions for how we can create a successful community of practice
 - Respond to others' posts on community of practice by identifying: a challenge we must overcome to develop a community of practice, a strategy for sustaining the community of practice over time, and a strategy for successfully encouraging participation. What should we do to create a community of practice within the program?
 - World Wide Web Search: Find information or examples related to communities of practice and share the site along with what you have learned from it with the group.
- Reading Assignments: I also ran across this very interesting set of publications from Canada. The first is really on theory, the second and third on different ways at looking at a community and development, and the fourth is really fun.
<http://www.cedworks.com/IGs.html>
- Module Assignments:
 - Short paper 1: applying the Principles of Good Practice to your own work: Due October 9.
 - Develop teams for group assignment
 - World Wide Web Search: Using that criteria, find a Web site that adds value to your practice and post it to the bulletin board along with why you found it a useful and credible site

Module IV (October 9 to October 23): Theory and Practice Go Hand in Hand

- Specific Objectives
 - Participants will identify examples of research-based practice.
 - Use the chat function in WebCT.
 - Participate in a guest speaker session online.
- Class activities
 - Guest speaker will talk about the interaction of research and practice in the evolution of the Community Development.
 - Post questions
 - Post examples from your own experience
 - Small Group Activity: Based on what you are learning about each other's interests, form small groups of 2 to 4 people around common areas of practice. For example, you may see commonalities related to helping small farmers, working with youth, or dealing with community conflict.
 - Using email, phone, or chat, share examples of your best experiences in research-based practice.
 - Develop a short presentation for the group that includes examples of research-based practice and suggestions for future research based on what you are learning in your practice.
 - World Wide Web Search: Share a Web site with one another that speaks to research-based practice related to the work you are discussing in your small group.
 - Post questions to other groups about their presentation.
 - Identify a common theme among the reports and suggest an insight that will be useful to you in your future.
- Reading Assignments: Community Capitals Workbook: go to: <http://www.comm-dev.org/> Click on publications; click on CD practice, and click on current issue.
- Module assignment:
 - Short paper 2: Opportunities and challenges in your community: Due October 23
 - World Wide Web Search: find a Web site that links theory to practice and post it to the bulletin board along with why you found it a useful and credible site

Module V (October 23 to November 7): The World of Community Development Practice

- Specific Objectives
 - Develop strategies on how this program can improve your community development practice and lead to additional professional opportunities.
 - Identify different roles connected with the field of community development.
- Class activities
 - Guest Speaker: Opportunities in the field of Community Development.
 - World Wide Web Search: Share a Web site with the group that is illustrative of the kind of work community developers do in the content area in which you have an interest.
 - Respond to the readings and the guest speaker with questions and your insights into which kinds of community development work you are most interested in.

- Share your ideas about how you might apply the community capitals framework to your own work.
- Module Assignment:
 - Community Development professional development plan including professional associations, listserv, and websites: Due November 7.
 - World Wide Web Search: find a Web site that provides information and resources to community development professionals; post it to the bulletin board along with why you found it a useful and credible site

Module VI (November 7 to November 20): Linking Learning to Action and Research

- Specific Objectives
 - Use the quiz function to assess the seminar.
 - Identify strategies for linking learning to action and research and develop a plan for making these links part of the degree program experience.
- Class activities
 - Group reports
 - Post your questions and comments about group reports and share with us some ideas of how you plan to link your learning to action and research as you take courses in the program.
 - Respond to comments of others in the class.
 - World Wide Web Search: Share a website you think others may be interested in.

Welcome to the On-line Masters Degree in Community Development

This summer at our annual faculty meeting, the faculty voted to approve a one-credit orientation course. That course will begin on August 21st and will be taught by Dr. Mary Emery. The book we will be using is: Rossman, M. 2002. Negotiating Graduate School: A Guide for Graduate Students from Sage Publications. I just checked Amazon.com. They have three new copies available and a 20+ used copies. They also have free shipping (5-9 days) on orders over \$25. You can probably also find it at Barnes and Nobles, order it from your local bookstore, or contact Sage directly. The course will focus on strategies for being successful in the on-line learning environment and in graduate school, an overview of the program, and an introduction to the field of community development. I am attaching an abbreviated version of the syllabus.

About Mary:

Mary Emery, Associate director of the North Central Regional Center for Rural Development, co-manages the Rural Community College Initiative and works on a multi-institutional, inter-disciplinary on-line masters degree in community development. In addition, she is also directs a National Rural Funders Collaborative project to collect information on successful outreach programs at Tribal and Native-serving schools. She manages a Lumina Foundation for Education grant to use coaching and appreciative inquiry as strategies to enhance replication of these best practices in other environments. She worked with the EDA University Center at United Tribes Technical College to provide training to tribal planners and to develop a successful EDA grant application to collect case studies on successful tribal economic development strategies. She is vitally interested in strategies that assist rural communities in transitioning into the 21st century, in implementing approaches that help communities grow their own jobs and businesses, and in helping reservation and non-reservation communities work together for sustainable regional economic development. She also has worked with small businesses and communities on how they can benefit from new technologies. She holds a PhD in Sociology from Rutgers University.

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